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THE BRUSHY, COOLEY, CYPRESS CREEK

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Boys, if that tall
Excelsior went in North
Louisiana keeps on holding
the soil as the hills, the
water is going to be at
clear down here on the river
that I'll be able to catch
all the fish my bill can
hold I A I.

NEWS!

UNITED STATES

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

MINER, LA.

18353

INTRODUCTION

This Bulletin is the first of a series of short articles to be issued at regular intervals by the Soil Erosion Service for the benefit of the farmer. Its purpose is to acquaint the farmer with the plans and purposes of Soil Erosion work. Later bulletins will show further the actual progress of the work as it is accomplished.

The Louisiana Project of the Soil Erosion Service consists of two areas, one in the Cadeau and Brushy Creek watersheds of Webster Parish and the other in Cypress Creek watershed in Lincoln Parish. If the water that falls on your land eventually finds its way into Cadeau or Cypress Creeks and a part of Brushy Creek, then you are entitled to the service. The areas total 155 square miles, or about 100,000 acres.

What is erosion? Erosion is the transportation of soil particles by the action of wind or water. Water erosion is the kind Louisiana is concerned with and consists in the moving of soil from a higher to a lower level. There are two types of erosion in this area, namely, gully and sheet. Gully erosion is the cutting of channels or ditches. Due to the fan type formation of the base of gullies, considerable sheet erosion is induced. Sheet erosion is the removal of layers of soil from continuous areas. This type of erosion is not so noticeable until serious damage has been done because it removes the soil in even layers.

In Missouri on the Shelby farm, seven inches of soil are lost in 40 years when cultivated in corn. When kept in sod, soil loss is practically none. It takes 5,000 years to rebuild the same amount of soil lost in cultivating corn forty years.

The control of erosion in the hill lands of Louisiana is an vital concern to every thinking citizen of Louisiana. There is no cultural practice in farming that is attracting more attention at present. The effectiveness of our better methods of farming are largely lost if they are not coordinated in such a way as to stop the tremendous soil wastage that is going on.

A survey of Louisiana reveals the following facts:

(See attached map.)

	PER CENT	ACRES
Barren erosion	27.5	7,400,000
Harmful erosion	1.0	2,800,000
Some sheet erosion	4.0	11,200,000
Practically no erosion	67.5	18,800,000
Total land area	100.0	29,200,000

About 10% of the eroded land in the hill section is so badly eroded that bringing it back to farming alone will be too expensive.

pasture land, therefore steep slopes that are subject to severe washing will be utilized by the farmer as either pastures or forests. These improved pastures will be sowed to desirable clovers and grasses, such as hop clover, white Dutch clover, black medick clover, lespedeza, bermuda grass and dallis grass.

FORESTRY: The importance and benefits of growing timber has been overlooked. There are thousands of acres of land in Webster and Lincoln Parishes, which due to the effects of soil erosion, have already passed beyond the point of profitable cultivation. This acreage, if planted in timber, would in a relatively short time produce a profitable income for the farmer, and at the same time hold the water and soil on the slopes and prevent unfertile sands from collecting on the bottom lands. Trees that are to be planted include the most rapid growing types, which will produce economical returns.

STRIP CROPPING: What is it and why use it? A strip crop is the planting of a strip of close growing fibrous rooted crop between strips of regularly grown crops. They are planted only on slopes. An example would be to drill or broadcast peas, sorghum, sudan grass, etc., in strips along with the rows on a contour the entire length of the field. The purpose of these strips is to check the flow of water as it runs off the field and prevent the soil from wash ing away.

All farmers, who have signed agreements and have slopes subject to erosion, have planned to use strip crops as an aid in controlling soil wastage.

COVER CROPS: All farmers who signed contracts to date are intending to plant oats and vetch this fall. These crops will hold the soil in place during the heavy winter and spring rains, use the plant nutrients as they become available instead of allowing them to wash down hill into the creeks, and furnish valuable feed or green manure. The oats and vetch will be planted on the steeper slopes most subject to erosion. Many Farmers intend to plant this cover crop in strips and use them for strip crops throughout the year. After the oats and vetch are cut for feed, peas, sorghum or soy beans will be planted.

TERRACES: The broad base terrace, ranging from 15 to 25 feet in width will be used most equanly. About 130 Farmers have signed agreements and terrace construction will begin as soon as the crops are gathered and weather conditions permit, on the farms that need terracing. Terraces alone, however, on steep slopes will not hold the soil. Heavy rains start small gullies between the terraces, causing the terraces to sand up and often break. For controlling this, strips of close growing crops will be planted just above, on top or just below the terrace. These strips will absorb most of the water, check its speed down hill and filter out the sand and silt that would otherwise wash away.

GULLY CONTROL WORK: Gully control work is already under way on many of the farms. 500 dams have been built to date. Types of dams used

the brush, rock, creek, pole and wire. These dams are put in as temporary structures until vegetation can reclaim the gulches.

SOIL PROBLEMS: One of the most serious hindrances to successful farming in North Louisiana is the work of the little animal known as "colongiers," moles and field rats. Every farmer has had experience with them and knows well the manner in which they cause damage to pastures, furrows, terraces and crops by their underground burrowing. Realizing the seriousness of this pest, plans are being made for having an extensive fall and winter campaign against them. Poison will be furnished and traps loaned to the farmer to carry on this warfare.

RAINFALL AND WELL GAUGING: You have been wondering probably what these gauges were surrounded by a heavy fence are. They are rain gauges, the standard for measuring accurately the amount of rain fall in the Caddo, Brushy and Cypress Creek watersheds.

Several cages are also being installed in abandoned wells for the purpose of watching the fluctuation in the ground-water table level.

WE ARE HERE TO SERVE YOU: The aim of the Soil Erosion Service is not merely to check the headlong rush of water with its heavy load of silt and sand down hill, but to be of service to the farmer in working out a balanced farm program, one that makes the best use of the land from the standpoint of finance and soil saving.

The Staff is composed of men well trained in problems of agriculture and engineering. Meticulous equipment is available to do a high job. We are here to serve you. We can serve you best by your cooperation with us. Remember that this paper is published for you and farmers. We are always at home. Bring us your problems.

